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league of nations is potential in the United States. If we could organize the representatives of the countries of Europe who are in America behind a program for a reconstructed world, we should have an instrument for world-order whose potentiality can not be measured. Instead, we hide our heads in the sand and think to make them forget by teaching them English!

There is no panacea for dealing with the immigrant simpler than that required for the whole world. And the existing deep-seated psychoses can only be cured through a long process of time. We must deal as wise physicians with a soul-sick people for whose trouble we have no responsibility but who have become an integral part of our lives.

The spirit and method of American-

ization must be part and parcel of the solution of the problems of Europe. The relations of groups, both in conflict and in coöperation, is the paramount issue of human society. If we can learn even a few of the laws underlying the conflict of groups we shall make rapid progress where we have been blindly groping. In the meantime, however, all these problems will resist solution until there is a just reorganization of Europe. Only when the ideals of democracy have removed the possibility of imperialistic exploitation will there be no longer a need for chauvinism to combat it. America can not save herself unless Europe is saved. Whether we will or not, our immigrants make the world-problem our problem, and the problem primarily one of psychology.

## Immigration, the Matrix of American Democracy

By ALLEN T. BURNS

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**I**MMIGRANTS to America for three hundred years have been inherently the more individualistic of their native fellow countrymen. Immigration with its inherent difficulties and new experiences has been a process of natural selection sorting out and appealing to the more daring, enterprising, self-reliant, self-assertive members of any group. Immigrants are all alike in possessing the spirit of the pioneer, the innovator, the explorer, the adventurer. America, the product of immigration, has come naturally and inevitably by her most distinguishing characteristics: freedom, liberty, independence.

Paul Bourget in *Outre Mere* says: "Everything in the United States grows clear when understood as an immense act of faith in the social beneficence of

individual energy left to itself." A friend recently remarked facetiously in connection with the deportation of Emma Goldman and her reported pleasure at being sent to Russia: "I don't see how, being an anarchist, she can like any country better than the United States." These remarks recall the original constitutional convention with its advocates of "as little government as possible."

Certain exigencies of immigration have always tended to modify this aggressive enterprising individualism. The journey was to a strange land, unknown difficulties were to be met, hostile forces were to be withstood, and tremendous obstacles to security and success had to be overcome. Rocky and wooded land or an industrial system of steel and strain had to be made

to yield a living; treaties and a *modus vivendi* with Indian or Tammany braves had to be negotiated; education in the religion, learning and arts of the elders seemed necessary; and protection against disease, destitution and violators of morals had to be established.

Individual resources and self-reliance have never been entirely adequate for these vital necessities of strange people in a strange land. There has had to be a pooling of interests and issues, a surrender of some personal preferences and peculiar practices. This merging of personal opinions and the fusion of individual resources have been the beginnings of collective decision and action, the origin of American Democracy.

But this making of common cause has taken place only with one instinctive purpose and under one imperative necessity. This is when individual development and welfare could be better promoted by joint rather than personal action and enterprise. Government has not come into being in its own interest but in the interest of the governed. The distinction between European and American Democracy is that the former is slowly centripetal, the latter still more slowly centripetal. Democracy in Europe has developed by gradually taking from the central authority rights and privileges demanded by the people for themselves. In America the people have grudgingly and little by little surrendered some of their individual prerogatives and power to a central authority. But this surrender has been after "individual energy left to itself" had proved insufficient, and common decision and action were required for the greater satisfaction of the many whose personal welfare was the unique purpose of the establishment of the government as well as of their own or their

ancestors' immigration and adventure in independence.

Experience and practice in common decision and action found necessary by self-reliant immigrants have formed the cradle and school of American self-government. De Tocqueville, the first European student of America's unique experiment, said:

Local assemblies of citizens constitute the strength of free nations. Town meetings are to liberty what primary schools are to science, they bring it within the people's reach, they teach men how to use and how to enjoy it.

In the United States the inhabitants were thrown but as yesterday upon the soil they now occupy . . . the instinctive love of their country can scarcely exist in their minds; but everyone takes as zealous an interest in the affairs of his township, his county, and of the whole state as though they were his own, because everyone, in his sphere, takes an active part in the government of society.

Would De Tocqueville visiting America today observe, "everyone takes an active part in the government of society"? To judge by the universal newspaper and personal comment after the last national nominating conventions he would find himself a very small minority if he made such a statement. Otherwise, why the backbreaking attempts to revive the local assemblies of citizens, to resuscitate "community councils," to restore the "neighborhood association" or "social unit"? But what these champions of the "primordial cell of our body politic" have failed to see is that the march of civilization has rendered impossible this return to the practices of the fathers.

Town meetings functioned in the beginning because vital, everyday interests coincided with the restricted and relatively isolated area occupied by these fellow townsmen. Fellowship, sustenance, security, novelty, adventure all had to come within the round

of town life. Political institutions were naturally founded on geographical divisions because these divisions were foci of the vital interests of citizens. Maintaining the political organization was synonymous with maintaining the collective activities necessary for life itself.

Universal transportation and communication have broken up the original structure of American political life. Interests do not run primarily by locality, but by occupation, tastes, experience, education. Only such as can make a living by it are sufficiently interested to maintain the old political devices so as to make them have the semblance of working. So arises the political machine. The lines of political action are so diverse from lines of everyday interests and groupings that the average citizen is inevitably thwarted and baffled in trying to take an effective part in government.

But new organic groupings are in process: investor, employer, laborer, farmer, lawyer, teacher, banker, social worker. All are trying to influence government through the old machinery. Some day the political structure will be changed to correspond with these new vital and active groupings as closely as the original framework based on territorial divisions coincided with the natural groupings of citizens of those days. The voluntary, spontaneous, self-governing associations of those of kindred interests are the preparatory schools of the coming political life of America.

In these days of transition and apparent political paralysis every democratic, vital organization is as important as the local assembly proved to be for the beginnings of our national life. Among these new cradles and schools of the self-government that is to be are those organizations of new immigrants which are as natural and

inevitable as those of the earliest settlers. As already suggested the forces producing these collective activities are similar to those that produced the original germ plasm of our democracy.

The new immigrant feels as isolated as his early prototype. Added to the strangeness of the land is the mutual strangeness of himself and the native born. On both sides this has made for shrinking from and avoidance of each other. Self-assertive as the newcomers must be to achieve immigration, the new immigration has come from peoples with a greater solidarity and cohesiveness than the old. Oppression, discrimination, remoteness from the more individualizing currents of civilization have produced a solidarity and unity which the wilderness gave our forefathers and for which we are again seeking and groping in order to have the "makings" of a newly effective democracy.

This isolation and solidarity is coincident with many emergencies and problems too great for individual solution. The situation has compelled a new pooling of interests and resources. Benefit associations, educational clubs, synagogues, churches, nationalistic societies and labor organizations are samples of what the problems of new immigrants have generated under as pressing necessity as forced the first colonists to surrender sufficient individualism for constituting a successful town meeting. No understanding of either the immigrant or the forces working for a reconstruction of politics can be adequate without inquiring whether the self-governing activities of the new immigrants will make a contribution to the new order.

Many recent experiences with immigrants indicate that in their spontaneous, indigenous organizations these new Americans are acquiring the experience and self-reliance that made the

American Revolutionaries insist that "all government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed"; and made De Tocqueville say of the participant in such humble intimate group action: "He practices the art of government in the small sphere within his reach; he accustoms himself to those forms which can alone insure the steady progress of liberty; he imbibes their spirit, he acquires a taste for order."

Two years ago a Ukrainian leader came into the writer's office and said he was head of a Ukrainian social settlement, with a plant valued at \$75,000. He and his associates wanted advice as to their future policy and activities. He was advised to go for help to the federation of settlements in his city. His reply was that his institution had been named "social settlement" so that it would be understood by native Americans and because that was the name of the American institution most like the one in question. These American institutions had been visited and carefully studied for effective methods. But the settlement federation had never asked the Ukrainian settlement to affiliate. So the Ukrainians would never seek advice from those who would not accept the Ukrainians as fellow workers and partners in a common field.

On July 4, 1919, one hundred and thirty Italian sick and death benefit societies of Chicago held a picnic together to form a federation. They had found the problems of their individual societies so perplexing as to require the pooling of their interests and resources. But another reason for the federation was given by the leader of the movement:

We have noticed that it is very popular among native Americans to conduct health campaigns directed largely at the foreign born. The intended beneficiaries are never

consulted in the planning or execution of these undertakings. Then their originators wonder why their efforts fall so far short of their hopes. They never realize that the immigrant is so American that he resents and rejects being made a mere recipient and beneficiary of others' good works. We are hoping that if our societies federate we shall look imposing and important enough to be taken in and made partners in all that is intended to promote our welfare.

In Fitchburg, Massachusetts, is a group of about six thousand Finns. They have faced the common problems of thickly settled industrial workers, *i.e.*, wholesome recreation, physical exercise, education, labor organization, housing and the high cost of living. But by collective effort they have built a social hall where they conduct programs under the direction of full-time, paid musical and dramatic leaders. They have erected another large building which has become the labor temple of the whole city. Here were held the first classes in English and civics for immigrants at the expense of the Finns themselves. In the same building is a gymnasium available for community use, and a coöperative savings bank with deposits in the hundreds of thousands.

Outside the city a recreation farm has been purchased for week-end outings and longer vacations. In the city an apartment, boarding house and store building has been put up. A milk delivery, bakery, furnishing store, and five meat and grocery shops are all operated on a coöperative basis. A fixed interest is paid on capital and all profits are distributed in proportion to purchases.

A leader in these enterprises explained how the economic activities came about. Most of the men belonged to an agitating revolutionary organization. A handful of members proposed starting a coöperative store

as yielding more immediate benefits than a propaganda for the overturn of society. These insurgents were ridiculed and voted down because their proposals if successful would lessen workingmen's interest in revolution. But like the original weavers of Rochdale, the few had the courage of their convictions. As they demonstrated their ability to improve their lot by collective, concerted action in distributing the necessities of life, their ridiculers began to take notice and one by one to secure membership in the democratic undertakings. With this practical experience in the profitableness of seeking progress by self-governing group decision and action has come a marvelous change. These erstwhile revolutionists have become ardent champions of the ballot as the only effective method of governmental progress. In the place of the mere handful of advocates of democratic action there remains a mere handful of Reds.

In the little mining town of Avilla in southwestern Pennsylvania, made up of Slovaks, Poles, Lithuanians and Negroes, a veritable town meeting was held by the members of an incipient coöperative store. A party of malcontents wanted to throw over the attempt to progress by slow orderly efforts of a united group, and to resort to discontent and agitation. This party seemed to be having the better of the argument until the cause of gradual, persistent but sure democracy was successfully championed by a West Indian Negro. Urging that effective collective action was the only sure though slow road to greater welfare and so the only sure cure for discontent, he said: "This coöperative business is like a great ship bound for America from an infected port. Of course before you are allowed to land in the wonderful country you must expect to be detained in quarantine a little while until you

are thoroughly disinfected." And democracy won the day. Though the immigrants of today are learning lessons of self-government in much the same way as the earliest immigrants, and though America is searching for capacity in self-government, the incidents related suggest that the friction or annihilation of immigrant organizations might be cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Still the situations described leave something to be desired. Our problems of democracy are too big and inclusive to be solved by separate groups working out solutions by themselves. Isolated self-governing activities of immigrants may be as far from producing national effectiveness as would have been the separate though self-governing activities of the thirteen original colonies.

How can these democratic propensities of the immigrant be fused and transmuted into the life of our communities and nation as a whole? Can these beginnings of self-government be merged and blended with the natural counterparts among the native born?

The town of Hatfield, Massachusetts, has become the home of large numbers of Poles like other Connecticut valley villages. At first the older residents scorned and resented them; then feared the town's utter demoralization. Its traditional unity, virtue and civic responsibility were threatened. As in many New England towns, the private citizens took part and had influence in their community's affairs through their church organizations. These were the organic units of town life. There was a Congregational Church and a Catholic Church, but each appealed equally little to the Pole. He consequently was *declassé* and becoming irresponsible and undependable. Some Poles also were concerned and proposed to mobilize Polish interest and responsibility in the way

that Yankees had done the same for the town, *i.e.*, through a church that would appeal to Poles. This was undertaken and the native residents joined in and contributed to the project. When the Poles had an equally representative and suitable organization for participating in the town's affairs, and were made welcome to do so, the Poles accepted their part in the community's business, civic, social and patriotic activities. By discovery of an organization that could be an equal and natural partner with others that functioned for common welfare this town has been saved from the paralysis and deterioration of similar villages where no common unit of solidarity and coöperation has been operating.

On a larger scale the United States Government found a way of utilizing and so merging the democratic capacities of these immigrant associations. After the first liberty loan campaign the son of an immigrant went to the Treasury Department and said that

the hand-plucking, buttonholing, personally embarrassing methods were not yielding anything like the possible results among the immigrants. He proposed that the thousands of immigrant societies be made agencies of the Liberty Loan Bureau. The suggestion was adopted. While the population related to these organizations is at the most 33 per cent of the people of the United States, the subsequent Liberty Loan Campaign secured between 40 and 50 per cent of their total subscribers through the foreign-language division.

Capacity for responsible collective decision and action is the direst need of the United States. Can immigrants again contribute to the generation of this capacity? Then in the interest of national unity and welfare this capacity must be appropriated, adopted and cherished as the earliest immigrant explorers would have seized the long sought fountain of the renewal of youth.

## Bohemians and Slovaks—Now Czechoslovaks

By JAROSLAV F. SMETANKA

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WAR made many changes in the life of Bohemian and Slovak immigrants in America. To start with, one hardly knows by what name to call them. The race from which they sprang is known as the Czechoslovak race and the land of their fathers is no longer a mere province of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, but the Czechoslovak Republic. This odd-looking name has by now become somewhat familiar to readers of American newspapers, but it has not supplanted in this country the names by which immigrants of that race have always been known,—they are still Bohemians or Slovaks.

The events in Europe have left a deep impression on the state of mind of the foreign-speaking groups here. Bohemians, and Slovaks even more, have acquired a feeling of dignity, self-confidence and assurance, now that they are members of a race which ranks with the independent races of the world. Men of Bohemian descent who formerly were almost unconscious of the fact that their roots were in Central Europe came forward in great numbers, manifesting an interest in the country from which their parents came, and those who were actually raised in what is now the Czechoslovak Republic follow eagerly the course of